

Exhibit 5

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA

PETER POE, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

No. 23-CV-00177-JFH-SH

GENTNER DRUMMOND, *et al.*,

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF LAURA SMALTS

I, Laura Smalts, declare the following:

1. I was born and raised in Oklahoma, and I currently live in Mustang, Oklahoma.
2. I was raised in a home that was very religious by a mother who was overwhelmed with her responsibilities and expectations. She exhausted herself trying to be the perfect Christian. I was hyperactive and obnoxious, and my mom was often agitated, irritable, and I perceived that she did not want me around. I came to believe that she loved boys more than girls because she treated my brother differently than she treated me. Then one day I learned that my mother had miscarried two boys before I was born. I believed my mom had wished one of them would have lived instead of me. I was devastated with feelings of guilt and wishing I could have been the boy I believed she wanted instead.

3. Because of my detachment from my mother, I did not know how to relate to girls. I felt awkward around other girls and ended up playing with the boys most of the time in school. I knew I was biologically female, but I believed I was different from the other girls.

4. At eight years old, I was sexually abused. This added to my confusion. As a teenager, men began to objectify and use me sexually. I grew to associate being female with being disgusting, filthy, and worthless. I felt that I had no value as a female and began to hate myself. In college, I began fantasizing through pornography and virtual sex games about the idea of having been a man instead of a woman. Over the next few years, the desire to become a man intensified until at the age of 25 I decided that I was supposed to have been a man and had just been born in the wrong body. I thought something had happened in the womb like a birth defect or a genetic anomaly. I saw no connection to childhood trauma. I was completely convinced by that point in my life that I had been born that way.

5. In 2007, at 25 years old, I began living as “Jake,” and I was on what I thought was the road to freedom. I did not know the hell I was in for.

6. Before beginning hormone treatment, I attended a support group in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Based on information about the WPATH standards of care I learned there, I believed I was required to attend at least three one-hour counseling sessions from a licensed therapist. At the time, I was completely convinced that I was a man trapped in a woman’s body. I was unable to entertain any other possibility, so I had no interest in counseling. I went to a therapist in Tulsa, Oklahoma only because getting hormone treatments required getting a letter stating that I was diagnosed with gender identity disorder. During the third session, the therapist set down her notebook, looked me right in the eyes, and said, “Wow, you really have

issues with your mom.” I was stunned. How did we get from talking about how I was really a man to talking about my mother? I blew up at her and spat back, “I am not here to talk about my mom!” She looked at me sadly and said softly, “So you just want me to give you the letter?” I said, “Yes, that’s all I’m here for. I don’t need counseling.”

7. The therapist gave me the letter, even though it was the opposite of what I needed. Not until years later did I realize what the therapist had discerned—that my unresolved, deep, and bitter resentment toward my mother (and other girls) led me to reject femininity. What I needed was psychological counseling to help me forgive my mother and the many others whom (I thought) had rejected me as a woman. Things could have very gone differently if the therapist had required me to work through my other issues before issuing me the letter I wanted so desperately. Had I done that, I don’t think I would have ever gone down the transgender road.

8. After I took the letter stating I had been diagnosed with gender identity disorder to my family doctor in Tulsa, he asked, “Are you sure this is what you want to do?” I said, “Yes,” and he said, “Okay,” and wrote me a prescription for Testosterone Cypionate and the syringes I would need to self-administer the injections. The nurse administered my first dose, but I learned to inject it on my own so I would not have to pay to have it administered.

9. I began taking testosterone by injecting it at home into my quadriceps muscle. The testosterone gave me more energy. I had an increased sex drive, and I was less emotional. My voice began to deepen, and my body and face began to look more masculine.

10. In spring 2009 I changed my legal name to Jacobe Nathan Perry and changed my birth certificate and other legal documents. I also had a double mastectomy in San

Francisco, California that September. Although I was initially elated about the results and felt free from the weight of my breasts, I realized that the legal changes and surgery had not actually made me a man. Depression began to set in. By 2012 I was fully passing as male. I had a job where I was known only as male, and no one knew my past. I had everything I had dreamed of.

11. I had thought hormones and surgery would transform me into a man, and I would be able to leave all the pain behind. Then I had thought just another year or two of hormones would make the dysphoria go away. But three years later it still had not resolved the dysphoria and my depression worsened. I decided to pursue more surgery because I did not want to have a trace of anything female. I did not want a single reminder of the truth I was trying to erase from existence.

12. In fall 2012, I had all my female organs removed by undergoing a full hysterectomy and oophorectomy in Tulsa. I was devastated to realize that, even after having everything female about my body removed, I was still not a man. I had been using prosthetic male genitalia that allowed me to use urinals and looked and felt somewhat natural. But I had constant problems with it including leakage, infections, sores, it getting out of natural placement, and more. I longed for it to be completely real. I began looking into the final stage: genital reassignment surgery.

13. Through my own research, I was shocked to realize the reality of what genital reassignment involved. Phalloplasty would have required multiple invasive surgeries—a minimum of three. I learned that there was a very real possibility that surgery could cause a loss of sexual sensation and that many patients, in fact, did lose it. Many who had genital

reassignment suffered urinary complications and other problems. Some needed additional, corrective surgeries. There was no way to be sure of what all I would ultimately have to suffer through or what the result would be. What was certain was that the surgery would not give me real male genitalia. The surgeon would have to cut donor muscle from my arm. Genital reassignment would involve placement of an artificial implant, which would have to be inflated for sexual purposes. The implant would be unusually long in its flaccid state, making it very uncomfortable most of the time. And it would not give me a man's ability to father a child.

14. I was desperate and willing to roll the dice. But genital reassignment would have cost me over \$100,000.00. I could not afford that, and my insurance did not cover it. I knew there was no way I was ever going to have that kind of money. I fell into even deeper depression, becoming suicidal at times. In horror, I realized there was nothing that was ever going to make my male identity real. I felt hopeless. I knew I was not really a man, but it was far too painful to return to being female.

15. The hormone treatments began causing medical problems, including a dangerously high hematocrit level that eventually required therapeutic blood withdraw to thin my blood. A doctor in Tulsa I had begun seeing, who specialized in treating transgender patients, warned that I was in serious danger of a stroke. I had chronic dizzy spells and would often get light-headed when standing. By 2014, at age 32, I began having heart problems. Sometimes I would simply walk across my apartment in Broken Arrow and my heart would start pounding. In addition, I began having cognitive problems including memory loss, reduced reading comprehension, and inability to focus. I was afraid to keep telling my new doctor about the health issues I was having because I feared she would stop the testosterone.

16. After nine years of transitioning and taking testosterone and going through many surgeries, I was left empty and broken. I was devastated to realize that none of the changes had made me a man. All I had done was change the outside. Although I truly believed that I was not a woman, I knew I could never be a man, no matter how badly I wanted it. I felt trapped in a world between male and female. I lived in a world of lies, suspended in limbo between reality and fantasy. I wanted to erase the existence of “Laura” so badly that even after realizing I could not be a man I decided to hide and pretend and be the “best man I could be,” rather than embracing myself as a woman. I realized that my transgender identity had become a mask hiding the truth.

17. What had promised to be freedom had in fact become my prison cell. I had become enslaved to wearing clothes that never fit right, injecting myself over and over with testosterone, and wearing prosthetics that were a constant reminder of how fake it all was. The hormones had caused puffiness and swelling in my face and extraordinary weight gain. This is a side effect that is not widely known that happens to many female-to-male transgender people, especially in certain body types.

18. My relationship with my parents had been almost nonexistent for years aside from an occasional phone call or dinner meeting. My mom stubbornly refused to call me by my chosen name, “Jake,” instead insisting on calling me “Laura.” Although I hated that, it was a tether to reality that eventually became a lifeline to me. It constantly reminded me of the truth that I was still Laura no matter how much I had changed my appearance.

19. Unknown to me, my mother had herself undergone a dramatic change. The angry, stressed-out mother I grew up with had been completely transformed. Her exhausting

legalistic religion had been exchanged for a genuinely life-giving faith in Jesus. Once I came to realize the extent of the change in my mother, I knew I wanted the same thing. I wanted desperately to be a man of God. I tried to convince myself that God had intended me to be a man and that maybe I just had a birth defect. But, over the following months I consistently listened to a radio broadcast that explained, “We are not just made up of our feelings, instincts, and inclinations. We are made in the image of God, and we can choose our behavior despite how we feel.” I didn’t want to admit this was true, but I knew it was.

20. At this time, at almost 34 years old, I was living in complete stealth mode, as I called it. No one except family and my partner knew I was transgender. I knew God wanted me to leave the transgender lifestyle, but it was too painful to face being a woman. But one night I felt that He asked me, “If you stood before me tonight, what name would I call?” I was devastated. I had hoped so desperately God saw me as Jake now. He said, “You cannot claim to love me and yet reject my creation.” I thought I was doomed and condemned. I thought, if God doesn’t accept me as Jake, then there’s no hope for me. But in the most loving voice I have ever heard in all my life, He whispered to me, “Let me tell you who you are.” And that is what began to free me. I realized then that no matter what I did to myself, God still saw me as Laura, just like my parents. And I knew He wasn’t finished with me despite how much damage I had done to my life.

21. But I still did not know how to fix it. Having grown up in such a legalistic religion, I kept thinking I had to fix my brokenness so God would be pleased and accept me. I did not yet understand His offer to let Him tell me who I was. After exhausting every option and not knowing how to fix it all, I prayed to God with all my heart, asking him to take my

life. I felt like I had fallen into a deep, dark pit from which I could not escape. It was then that I experienced a vision of Jesus reaching into my pit with an outstretched arm, asking me to leave everything and follow him. I trusted him, and I walked away from everything I had known: my job, my partner of almost eight years, my financial security, and my entire transgender identity. I lived with my parents over the next few months as I detransitioned back to living as a woman. I was embraced by the women at my mother's Bible study and the girls in my discipleship group, and I was overwhelmed with their affirmation of me as a woman. As a result, my belief that I was meant to be a man vanished.

22. It has been about seven years since I began to detransition. Over that time, I have come to know a wholeness that I never knew was possible. As I have healed, I have come to understand the causes of my struggles. As I became more involved in church, I attended Bible studies that helped me learn more about God and how much He loved me. He began to peel the layers of the onion away little by little, and I began to understand all the lies I had believed and all of the wounds I had suffered. As the women in my mom's Bible study and church loved on me and accepted me as one of the women, and as I forgave my mom and reconciled with my parents, the transgender feelings melted away. They have never returned. I am 100% free today, and I have not only embraced my female identity but also absolutely love being feminine.

23. I wish that my therapist had never given me the letter to pursue hormone therapy, which put me on the road to medically transitioning to live as a transgender person. At the time, I was so convinced that was what I needed. But I was so wrong. Although I wanted so badly to believe that the hormones and surgery would resolve my dysphoria, that

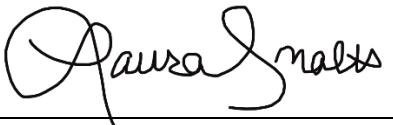
just wasn't the case. I spent so much money and so many years of my life pursuing step after step of medical procedures in vain striving to obtain peace and happiness. But those things didn't help me. Instead, they left me with a great deal of debt, physical and emotional scars, and lifelong medical issues. The only intervention that has ever helped me without hurting me far worse is psychological counseling. It is only by finding peace with God and working through the childhood issues that gave rise to my dysphoria with a counselor that I have finally been able to heal.

24. Not only do I not desire to return to a male identity, on May 14, 2022, I married an amazing man named Perry who fully loves me and embraces me as his wife. His masculinity has helped bring further healing as I am learning that despite my faults and shortcomings, he loves the girl I was created to be.

25. I fully support laws that save children from making the same horrible mistakes that I did. I believe SB613 does just that. I have met many former transgender people, and, like me, they say the same things: the physical transition was never real, it never resolved the gender dysphoria, and what they truly needed was psychological counseling, not hormones and surgery.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on June 13, 2023.



Laura Smalts